

*CITIZENS' TASK FORCE ON CHARGERS ISSUES*  
*MEMORANDUM*

DATE: July 24, 2002

TO: Citizens' Task Force on Chargers Issues

FROM: David E. Watson, Chairperson, Citizens' Task Force on Chargers Issues

SUBJECT: First Task Force Meeting

---

Hello Fellow Task Force Members.

Congratulations to all of you on your appointment to the Citizens' Task Force on Chargers Issues. I am looking forward to working with each of you. I'm sure we will all get to know each other well as we tackle the immense job we have ahead of us. I intend to rely on your individual expertise, experience and opinions in the next several months. Although there have been sports related task forces in the past, ours seems to have a broader scope and we're going to have to study a lot of different issues to formulate recommendations for the City Council. In short, we have a lot of work to do.

It looks like our first meeting will be August 8 in the War Memorial Building in Balboa Park. You will receive a more formal notice and information from Libby Coalson, our main contact with city staff. Some of the agenda for the first meeting will be procedural: swearing us in, along with a presentation on ethics, conflicts of interest, Brown Act and other similar matters. Mayor Murphy also will be on hand to offer a few words of encouragement. After that, we're on our own.

To help you prepare for the first meeting, I thought I'd send you this list of ideas and suggestions for moving forward. I'm offering these only to stimulate discussion and input. I hope to operate by consensus once we start meeting regularly. I want, need and encourage your input, suggestions and ideas on how to improve, expand or revise anything I've listed here. As you review the list, think about whether we want or need a subcommittee for one or more of the topics we analyze. There are pros and cons to subcommittees and I'm undecided at this point.

Process: By law all of our meetings will be open to the public. If we form subcommittees, I think those should be open as well. The public deserves to see how we organize ourselves, schedule our information gathering and analysis--and observe our deliberations and decision - making. Although we will probably have one venue where we meet most of the time, I'd also

like to suggest that we hold at least one substantive public meeting in each Council district. This will stimulate new ideas and more public participation. Also please think about a regular meeting day. We may need to meet twice a month, so we should try to set a regular schedule just for planning purposes (i.e. the first and third Wednesday evening or second and fourth Thursday evening, or vice versa).

Also, think about how we can best solicit and receive public input. An idea one of you suggested is to have certain meetings dedicated only to public comment, with working meetings in between. If one of our earliest meetings is devoted to public comment, that might give us a better gauge on whether we're studying the right issues and moving in the right direction. Another idea is to have public comment at the end of every meeting.

We hope we will have a page on the city's website. And our meetings will be televised on the local access channel. The City has allocated a certain budget for us, \$180,000. I believe City staff will give us information about hiring a consultant who is expert on sports facilities financing. We can choose whether to have an outside consultant or not, but I believe we will need one. Of course, we can solicit analysis and expert opinion from a variety of other public organizations and public sources.

Substance: I personally have a lot to learn about the Chargers, the NFL and the role they play in the City. Questions I have are:

1. What are the terms of the current contract between the City and the Chargers? What are each parties' contract rights? What are the possible ramifications and remedies if the Chargers decide to leave? A presentation by the City Attorney or any other party we deem appropriate would help create a foundation of knowledge about the current situation. We don't want to prejudice any position the City may have, but some basic, factual analysis would be helpful. This is important because one possible recommendation is to simply enforce the existing contract.
2. What is the Chargers' current financial situation? Gathering this information will depend on the Chargers' cooperation, but the public will want to know and understand why the Chargers believe they need a new stadium.
3. How can we quantify the Chargers' economic contribution to the City? It probably is possible to generate certain types of numbers to measure the Chargers economic benefit. How do you quantify the intangible benefits of an NFL football team? Does the economic benefit warrant a public subsidy? And if so, how much?
4. What is the current state of the stadium? How often is it used? For what? What is its economic value to the City as is?

5. What are the various ideas and options for financing a new stadium? We should take a hard look at financing a new stadium, regardless of whether we ultimately recommend a new stadium.
6. What are the alternative uses for the stadium site? If any? How can this City asset be better utilized?
7. How do we deal with the competing financial issues facing the City? Even if a new stadium is a good idea, is it better than something else? Do we recommend priorities or do we make a proposal and recommend the Council study the cost/benefits of competing financial needs? This is more of a bigger policy issue for the Council, but I don't think we can ignore it.

These are just thoughts I've had over the last several days. At the first meeting, I'd like to discuss process as one topic. After that discussion, I'd like to discuss the list of substantive issues and obtain lots of suggestions from you--so come prepared with your ideas. Perhaps, then, we might start assigning tasks to staff. I'm sure I have not covered all the issues we need to analyze. That's why I wanted to send this now so you will have time to think about, and be ready to offer, your own suggestions. Many of you know a lot more about this than I.

Frankly, I intend to spend a lot of time learning the next few months and I look forward to going through that process with each of you.

Thank you again for your willingness to work on this project. I look forward to your ideas and suggestions at our first meeting.

David E. Watson  
Chairperson